

---

# HUNTING STOCK OF IDIOMS AND HUNTING CULTURAL TRADITION BASED ON THE MATERIALS OF COMMERCIAL SPEECH OF KAMA REGION

**Ivan Alekseevich Podyukov**

*Federal State Budget Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education 'Perm State Humanitarian Pedagogical University', Sibirskaya str. 24, Perm, 614096, Russia*

(Received 10 September 2014)

---

## **Abstract**

The article deals with the main semantic groups of terminological and expressive phraseology, etiquette formula, presented in Russian hunting speech of the Kama region. The peculiarities of imagery and sources of hunting phraseology are analyzed, as well as the functions and stylistic qualities. Separate mythological images, typical of the bearers of hunting subculture, are described. The reflection of peculiarities of commercial subculture and national learning experience of natural world in hunting stock of idioms is studied. The etiquette rules and moral-aesthetic norms, typical of the bearers of hunting traditions, recorded in hunting language, are considered. The conclusions are made about modern state of hunting speech, about preservation of evidences of linguistic magic, hunting euphemism and taboo periphrasis in hunting stock of idioms.

*Keywords:* language, professional subculture, cultural-linguistic stereotypes, national specificity, taboo

---

## **1. Introduction**

Hunting language in general structure of national language presents cultural heritage of the past, and simultaneously living, developing phenomenon. It came from the depth of centuries, and its use by modern hunters underlines their respect for the ancestors' heritage and hunting traditions. In modern cultural situation, when the traditional knowledge about nature and the relations of a person to it are being lost quickly, hunting speech can be evaluated as a unique 'product' of national cultural-linguistic creativity, carrying the centuries-long experience of human communication with the world of nature.

Modern study of hunting subculture is fulfilled in different directions. In the number of philosophical and culturological works, the role of hunting is comprehended in the person's discovery of the essence of his existence, including the establishment of the supreme value of hunting for a modern

person, who, thanks to this ancient form of activity, gets a unique world outlook, moral-ethic and aesthetic experience. In particular, it is described in classical philosophical work of the Spanish philosopher and sociologist José Ortega y Gasset [1]. The main idea of the author is that hunting is a part of human nature, a unique possibility to get the human happiness, only if it keeps moral meaning and respect for the animal. The hunting teaches such code of ethics, which is kept up by the person on his own, without eyewitnesses, against the background of mountain and severe forests. In the work of D. Pozevits [2], the whole hunting process is considered in the ethic context, from preparations to animal taking, the place of hunting is determined in American culture. The author mentions, that as distinct from another values of today's civilized life, hunting provides a person with the opportunity to feel himself as a part of huge living organism, named nature, allows perceiving the beauty of the world around from within.

Definite study of traditional knowledge of hunting is usually oriented at the territories, where many of its archaic forms, mythologically motivated rituals and magical practices are preserved and stay alive. The study of V.A. Borogyakov [3] is based on active attraction of Khakass materials, reflecting animistic representations, on the description of rituals, aimed at success securing in business, on popular believes, connected with animal worship. In the work of Z.K. Khiba [4], at the example of hunters' speech of Western Caucasus, the hunting taboo-periphrases are described, magic aspects of hunting vocabulary use are also mentioned. The study of D. Etiendem et al [5] is based on the analysis of rituals, myths, taboo bans, recorded in the Republic of Cameroon and referring, first of all, to gorillas, as spirit animals (the authors of the work, among the other things, suggest to strengthen the ecological problems, existing in Africa, by including the traditional taboo systems to them). The study of E. Hill [6] describes the rituals of hunters from Chukotka and Alaska, and there is mentioned, that at present, these rituals are not used as autonomous, they are organically included to the context of everyday life of traditional hunters. The economics of the modern hunting to the northwards of Europe is studied in the work of Ann Matilaynen and Suzanne Keskinarkaus [7]; the researchers reveal different hunting styles in Northern countries – 'Scottish/Irish' hunting style, focused on travel industry, and Scandinavian style, where hunting is considered mostly as leisure activity and way of living.

If the phenomenon of hunting itself is studied by modern scientists from different angles, from philosophical to economical, then the study of hunting speech, at present, frequently reduces to its lexicographical descriptions. In different countries are a great number of paper and online hunting dictionaries, in particular, The Dictionary of Hunting Language by Joseph and France Kehrein [8], The Polyglot Dictionary of Nature and Hunting by S. Zykov [9]. The major investigations of Russian hunting speech involve the works of I. Lorenz, devoted to hunting terminology [10, 11], the studies of E.K. Tselykhova about special sub-languages, as a part of hunting language (hawking, the language of hunters-hound breeders and others) [12]. The linguists developed separate dictionaries, reflecting lexicology of hunting in different territories of

Russia, their specificity in various natural-climatic and cultural-historical areas of the country. It is 'The Dictionary of Fishermen and Hunters of Northern Priangarye' by V.I. Petrochenko [13], which describes the names of animals and birds, traps, ways of hunting, and also a publication about hunting vocabulary of northlands of Tyumen region by A.M. Koshkareva [14].

## **2. Results**

Phraseology is the most important part of victionary of any subculture, as the phraseological images vividly reflect both local and national originality of cultures. Many common phraseological units are obliged to hunting in their origin. For instance, among hunters, there appeared a familiar slangy evaluation of a person, who lost his hearing, as well as the absent-minded, featherheaded man - *deaf as a beetle* - the expression, based on rethinking of the blackcock's property to lose hearing for the estrus period. A phraseological unit *to kill a beaver* (also slangy) has two opposite meanings: 'to get something valuable; to achieve something prominent' and 'to bring hogs to a bad market, to get something bad instead of good'. The first meaning, undoubtedly, is motivated by stable perception of beaver's fur as extremely valuable, used to trim the elite clothes (Russian boyars in past wore long beaver fur coats, good collars and headings from the beaver). That is why, the use of motive 'to kill a beaver' in wedding folklore is curious. It is used as a mean of idealized description of the ritual participants: in old wedding song, parents of the married couple are presented as hunters, who are searching for the beaver for the collar of mustelide fur coat (*"The hunters are searching for the beaver, they are searching for the black beaver. They want to beat the beaver, they want to get it down, to sew the mustelide fur coat, to make it fluffy with the beaver"* - Cherdyn). Vyatka wedding saying tells, that *"the wedding rides the horses, the beavers, the gorodetsky sledges"*. The actions, connected with the beaver search and capture, can stand for the alliance in general. Thus, the Byelorussian wedding song implements a parallel 'a beaver - a fiancé'. In the song a marten, who asks a beaver to sail to her in a dark night, is used as a parallel to the words of the bride, who asks the groom to come to her.

The second meaning of the expression *to kill a beaver* 'to bring hogs to a bad market' is usually connected with the proverb *To kill a beaver - not to see the good*, which, in its turn, is based on the ban, familiar to many nations, to kill the beaver. This ban is supported by the hunting practice: the beaver is rarely chased with the gun, he is being caught with traps, as, even if getting the deathful bullet wound, the beaver frequently swims away from the hunter. However, from our point of view, the main thing is in mythological motivation of the ban. The expression is connected with the ancient sacral perception of this animal, as in pagan mythologies of different nations, the beaver is closely connected with higher worlds (that is why beaver hunting can be only ritual, otherwise it brings bad luck). Industry and definite intellect, the animal's ability to build lodges and dams, to walk on two feet, resulted in the fact that many

nations perceived the beavers as previous people (The books by James Fenimore Cooper mention that First nations called the beaver *a water little man*).

Hunting practice notes a lot of special set expressions, not come into common use. The major, most significant part of hunting phraseology consists of the terminological phraseological units, compound terms. These terms are usually formed from the combination of the adjective and the definable noun. They help to specify generic terms, pointing at the types of hunting, at the ways of hunting tackle use, at the features of trade animal and fowl, important for hunting. Thus, the animal, occasionally disturbed by noise, is called *noise*, the migrating animal is called *migratory*. Young squirrel with unsatisfactory, unripe fell is called *green*, the squirrel, which feeds in the pine forest, is called *piney*, the squirrel with clean ripe fell is called *clean*. Essentially, folk terms discriminatingly point at the economic value, at the place of animal habitation. The 'classification' of squirrels, expressed in these terms, is particularly practical and differs from the scientific one (the Zoology knows more than 50 types of this animal, from *Striped African* to *Chinese Rocky*). In Russia, only two scientifically determined types of squirrels are widespread - *a squirrel* and *a Persian squirrel*, inhabiting in the Caucasus region. Different abovementioned Permian names are aimed at the characterization of ordinary squirrel, which is called *red*; a combination *red squirrel*, noted in the speech of Permian hunters, has the evaluation of young summer squirrel with unripe fell, which cannot be shoot (it is curious, that the combination *red squirrel* in English stands for the name of ordinary squirrel). In a similar manner, the phraseology mentions the varieties of fox in colour and quality of fur (a *cross fox* is a fox with dark stripe along the chine, *red fox* is a fox with yellow-red colour of fur), the varieties of hare (*Russian hare* or *Lepus euripaeus*, a hare with light-brown fur, known in England as a *grey hare*, *graue Hase* in Germany; *blue hare*, *Schneehase* in German, *white hare* in English). The correlation with the ethnonym, used in the expression Russian hare, is conventional. The same as the word Russian, the word *Lepus euripaeus* (*Rusak*) is etymologically connected with the Common Slavonic stem *rydj* - red and points at fair, whity-brown colour of hair (fur).

In the number of names, such as *field pig* 'wild boar', forest coat 'elk', the wild animals are determined through the domestic ones, and the nomination itself is corrected by definitions. The word *field* points at the habitat: the *field* in hunting speech names not the constant field near the village, but the place of catching, with which such names, as *field hazel grouse* 'partridge', *field goose*, 'gray goose' are also connected. It is also typical to transfer of names of barnyard fowl to the hunting wild fowl (*forest sheep* 'snipe', *field hen* 'gray hen'; the names are motivated by the orientation at peculiar 'domestication' of forest, the environment, habitual for the hunter).

A great quantity of nominations is connected with the hunting itself, with its types. *Enclosure hunting* is a group hunting, when the drive beater ousts the animal to the shooters; the hunting by approaching to the animal's habitat is called *the hunting from approaching*; the hunting in free search is called *fording hunting*; moose hunting during foiling is called *hunting on roaring* (*on*

*groaning*). The name of hunting on crust, which bears the dog, but makes the animal run difficult, *the hunting with dog's leg*, is specific in structure (the expression is based on instrumental meaning of ablative cause of the combination *with dog's leg*). As it was mentioned above, hunting is frequently characterized by its correlation with *field* (*evening field* 'hunting in the evening'), *red field* in the speech of canines hunters 'successful hunting on red animal - wolf, fox or trot', compare: *polevat* 'to hunt', *zapolevat* 'to get the animal'). The field in this case is understood as not the cultivation of ground for sowing, but hunting lands (the same is in traditional congratulation for hunter, who gained the animal or bird - *With the field!*). *The field* (etymologically – 'empty, clear area') symbolically presents not simply a territory for bag search, but the way out to another space, differentiating 'this' and 'that' worlds. The image of *the field* is used in folklore in the same way, where the hero's going to the pure field acts as entrustment of yourself to higher forces and case-luckiness.

Another symbolic presentation of hunting is its comparison with the path, road (*long path* 'long-term hunting season', *white path* 'hunting in winter, when the ground is covered with snow and the animal tracks are well seen', *mottled path* 'hunting in the end of the autumn at falling, but melting snow', *soft path* 'hunting in snow in thaw or at humid soil'). The hunters use the combination *hunting path*, as well as the words *putik*, *khoz*, *ukhoz*, in the meaning of 'being involved in hunting', as the animal catching presupposes constant movement along animal and hunting *putiks* (*paths*).

Stable terminological combinations are used to denote one or the other peculiarities of hounds. The proper hound is the *forest dog*; the one, which hunts for several years (*fields*), is called *multifield*; the one, taught to flush birds, animals, when the hunter shots, is called *gun dog*; the one, able for a so called *top search* (a way to find the birds, when the dog does not stoop head, i.e. follows the animal smell) - *top nuzzling dog*, the one for elks - *elk dog*. The other dog characteristics, based on their abilities, are denoted lexically - duck dog 'a dog, which hunts for the ducks', squirrel dog 'a dog, used to hunt for squirrels', animal dog 'a dog to hunt for elks', elk dog 'a dog, coached for the elk', bear dog 'a dog to hunt for bears'.

The curious mythological comprehended nomination *four-eyed* about the dog with light spots above the eyes, which is considered as especially talented with the gift to see the forest owner Silvan. It shall be mentioned, that almost mystical relation of hunter towards his dog is shown in a great number of linguistic facts. Death, loss of the hound is always described allegorically - the dog *died down*, *withered*, *spent*. The euphemism *to affianc a dog* 'to lose the dog during hunting' is built on famous folk analogy of death and marriage (compare: about the death of the old woman, the Permian expression *Ivan Grobovich affianced*). The expression to lose the track of the dog 'to lose luckiness for good dogs after the death of special one' also expresses the superstitious presentation about the dependency of the hunter on the dog.

One more model of compound terms is presented by the combinations of the verb with the noun: *to sit on squirrel* 'to hunt for the squirrel', *to sit on dummy* 'to hunt constantly with dummies', *to sit on solonetz* 'to wait in ambush, waiting for the animal, got used to salt', *to sit on geese* 'to hunt constantly for geese'. These verbal terminological phraseological units denote one or another ways of catching. At that, the verb *to sit*, apart from pointing at the immobility (what is important in the majority of cases in one or another type of hunting) gets the semantic expansion 'to exist for a long time in one or another socially important quality'. The dialect expressions, such as *to sit on group* 'to be a disabled', *to sit on spindle* 'to spin, to be a spinner' are formed in the same way. One more way to denote the types of catching is determined by the verbs of motion *to walk/to go/to run - to walk (to go, to run) for hunting* 'to hunt', *to go for the feather* 'to go foaling'. In this case, there is the use of verbs of spatial movement, widespread in Russian, to denote metaphorically the constant, socially significant activity.

A major part of phraseological terms also refers to various hunting appliances, traps and their parts. Thus, special sledge for burden manual carriage is called *two-runner sledge* (with two runners), *three-runner sledge* (with three skis-runners), hunting skis with fur underneath are called *sewed (sewing, kysovoy, podvolochny, skins) skis*. A special joint to fasten fell-skins to the hunting ski is called *a wolf tooth*. This name metaphorically reflects the similarity of fell edges, pulled to each other with straps, with sharp, cutting teeth of the wolf. Besides, the introduction of wolf theme to such important hunter's equipment, as skis, symbolically 'strengthens' them and the catcher himself.

The expressive part of hunting phraseological dictionary is presented by the expressions, contacting the evaluation (positive, and frequently, negative) of notions, realias, one or another qualities of hunting. This is a characteristics of good or, on the contrary, bad shooting: *a royal shot* 'a successful shot overhead, into coming bird'; *to let it into milk* 'to overshoot' (it is most probably, that the expression came from the target shooting, the *milk* here means 'a white field of the target, its edges'). The ironic expression *to lead for eleven o'clock* evaluates the shot, when the shot passes by, on the left from the target. It is based on the presentation of spatial coordinates through the temporal and reminds of the indecent expression, widespread in men environment, about weak men erection *to stand at half past six*. Positive meaning have those phraseological units, containing general names of valuable spoils of the chase, such as *red fowl* 'the wild fowl, stable to dog chasing and difficult for catching' (first of all, they are the sandpiper - snipe, double snipe, half snipe, woodcock), *red animal* 'big game with valuable fur', also difficult to catch (bear, wolf, fox, lynx). Partly, the definition *red* in these cases is motivated by the presence of reddish, close to red colour in the coat pattern of animals and birds (reddish-ochreish colours of the snipe, reddish brown colours in coat of woodcock, reddish brown colour of the bear fur). The main reason in epithet selection is the active use of red colour in Russian linguoculture to denote something beautiful and simultaneously connected with active origin, passion and energy.

Up to present times, the euphemic nominations in hunting speech are very diverse. As is known, euphemisms are used instead of names of one or another notions, banned as per religious, psychological and moral-ethic ideas; the hunters traditionally use the euphemisms in their discussions on prohibited topics, because of their sacral character. It is evidently manifested in words, included to the semantic field 'to kill': *to drop the animal, to let (the bird) down* ('to bring down, shooting what it flies'). The euphemisms are also actively used to denote the animals, which are perceived by hunters as especially dangerous or mythologically comprehended (in past the names of game animals were prohibited, to conceal the hunters' intentions from them: ancient hunters believed, that animals understand the human speech). The phraseological units about the bear have the euphemic character: *black beast, forest owner, shaggy ear*. The euphemism here is created by means of metonymic descriptiveness (general pointing at colour, fur form), appeal to generic name (the word *beast* is used by hunters only to denote either bear or elk). In other cases, there is used a deprecatory comparison of the dangerous beast with the relative (*forest father in law* about bear; the names of severe illnesses are also tabooed in folk speech by their correlation with relatives: *aunt, stepmother* about fever). Such expressions, ever losing their mythological meaning, preserve special ethic connotation, indicating of manifestations of politeness in human communication with the animal.

Both marked euphemisms and a number of phraseological names of rituals, mythological personages, sacral objects-helpers show that in hunting environment, till the present, the traces of magic ancient thinking are preserved, according to which the person, by means of symbolic actions, can influence on one or another events. In this context, it is notable a definite similarity of hunting rituals in different, even faraway cultures. Thus, before the hunting expedition, the Northern hunter of the Cherokee tribe had to swim to have good luck, and in Russian tradition, the hunter dived in clothes, with a gun and a dog, if he had no luck. The Cherokee hunters in past left the elk's legs on the place, where the animal was chased, as a mark of respect for the animal [J. Broadley, *Cherokee Hunting Traditions*, [www.classroom.synonym.com/cherokee-hunting-traditions-8801.html/](http://www.classroom.synonym.com/cherokee-hunting-traditions-8801.html/), accessed on 28.07.2014], and in the tradition of Permian hunters, it was necessary to leave not only the legs, but also the head of the elk on the hunting place. Permian catching ritualism is closely connected with the general context of traditional mythological presentations. The expression *held the hood* is used as joke towards specially successful during hunting excursion and is based on the prohibition, known to many hunters, on intimate connection with the woman before hunting, instead of which the hunted had to touch the woman's genitals (such rituals are also known in another situations, as a manifestation of fertility magic). Stable combinations *arrow-flash, thunder arrow* name a special object, used in hunters' magic practice - petrification, got from sand grains, fused from the stroke of lightning; the hunter, who had this arrow, was considered to be specially profitable (up to present times, such arrow is also preserved in tradition of illness exorcism). An echo of honouring the

Silvan, the owner of forest and animals, is preserved in hunting denominations-dignifying of the Silvan in name-patronym, such as *Adam Adamovich*. The use of the first man's name, as a base for the name of forest and animal owner, is motivated by the fact, that *Adam* symbolizes the origin of humankind, acts a sacral forefather and protector. The presentation that the Silvan can help the hunter to chase the animal, if the hunter blandishes it with gifts, is reflected in many mythological stories: "We had a grandfather, we did not live without meat. He went to the forest, brought ten hares pickback. As well as the ducks, he carried everything. One day he told grandmother: 'We need to lay the table'. The old woman did everything he told. The grandfather sat at the table, talking to somebody, treating to somebody, and we do not see whom. Now is the same. The men kill the elk in the forest, and leave a part, means a shoulder, in the forest for the Forest grandfather. It is the evil spirit, it is not good, it is necessary to make a present for him. The hunters in Great Thursday bring presents to the forest for the Forest Grandfather - wine, bread. We had one fisherman. Once he went fishing and caught nothing, he stopped for the night in forest hut, one man sat there. The Forest Grandfather entered to their hut: 'Hello' – 'Hello'. He asked to smoke, but they both were nonsmokers. He asks, what and how. One says that he went for birch bark, but lost his way. 'Never mind, you will find the way tomorrow'. The second tells: 'I did not catch the fish'. – 'Never mind, you will catch tomorrow'. – 'What do you do yourself?' – 'I drive the animals, go and see'. The old men went out, there was like a day, but it was a night. Everyone was there - the hares, the elks and the bears. He whistled, and 'Uh! Uh!'. Clacking began in the forest, and there is nobody. Some say, that there is a day in the forest, that it is prohibited to go to the forest, because the Forest Grandfather gathers all animals. It is a Displacement Holiday." (*Written from A.I. Detkina, 1914 year of birth, Kelich village, Yurlinsky region, the Perm territory*).

Many hunting etiquette formulas are connected with rituals and word magic. Thus, the expression (*in order*) *in the white world, like the pretty penny* has the advice for hunter not to overshoot, although, in practice, it acts as a well-known expression *good luck*, as the wishing of success. Different formulas of hunter's excuse before the chased animal: *no need to confuse the hunter with the stub; I did not kill you, you yourself came to the shot* (with these words the animal's body is covered with fir branches). The expressions *to drink on animal (on blood, on body)* 'to drink alcohol at the killed animal on the occasion of getting a big game' are also connected with the honour ritual for the killed animal.

### **3. Conclusion**

The hunters' speech, judging by the phraseological material, has not only ethnographic and properly linguistic, but also the folklore and artistic value. It contains a significant in volume layer of information about hunting subculture, the presentation about the unity of man and nature, the equality of people and

representatives of natural world, inherited from the antiquity. Hunting idiomatic also brings us the echo of ancient belief into material power, word magic.

## **Acknowledgement**

The article is executed under the grant 055-P ‘The Linguistic Communication in Conditions of Bilingualism (Ethno- and Sociolinguistic Research)’ of the Strategic Development Program of the Perm State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University. The author expresses gratitude to the Associate Professor of the Department of General and Slavonic Linguistics of the Permian State Scientific and Research University named after I.I. Rusinova for the possibility to use in the article the materials of her field folklore and dialectological research in Northern Kama region.

## **References**

- [1] J. Ortega and Y.G. Ortega, *Meditations on Hunting*, English translation, Wilderness Adventures Press, Belgrade (MT), 2007, 140.
- [2] J. Posewitz, *Beyond Fair Chase: The Ethic and Tradition of Hunting*, Falcon Publishing, Helena, 2002, 128.
- [3] V.A. Borgoyakov, *Vocabulary of hunting and fishing in the dialects of the Chinese language*, PhD thesis, Russian Academy of Sciences. Institute of Linguistics, Moscow, 2001, 22.
- [4] Z.K. Khiba, *A Contribution to Abkhaz Lexicography: The Secret Language of the Hunters*, Bedi Kartlisa, Paris, 1980, 38, 269-277.
- [5] D.N. Etiendem, L. Hens and Z. Pereboom, *Ecol. Soc.*, **16(3)** (2011) 22.
- [6] E. Hill, *Cam. Archaeol. J.*, **21(3)** (2011) 407–426.
- [7] A. Matilainen and S. Keskinarkaus, *The economic role of hunting tourism – examples from Northern areas*, University of Helsinki. Ruralia Institute, Helsinki, 2010, 108.
- [8] J. Kehrein and F. Kehrein, *Dictionary of Weidmann language for hunting and speech Friends*, Verlag M. Sändig, Regensburg, 1898, 338.
- [9] C. Zykov, *Elsevier's Dictionary of Nature and Hunting: In English, French, Russian, German and Latin*, Elsevier Science, 2002, 518.
- [10] I. Lorenz, *Russian hunting terminology. Analysis of language use of hunter*, Verlag Otto Sagner, München, 1978, 558.
- [11] I. Lorenz, *Russian-German Hunting dictionary*, Verlag Kubon & Sagner, München, 2005, 181.
- [12] E.K. Tselikhova, National hunting magazine ‘Ohota’, **8** (2012) 28-31.
- [13] V.I. Petrochenko, *Dictionary of fishermen and hunters of northern Angara Region*, Krasnoyarsk book, Krasnoyarsk, 1994, 120.
- [14] A.M. Koshkareva, *Materials for regional vocabulary "Special vocabulary of northern Tyumen region"*, Part 2, Nizhnevartovsk State Pedagogical University, Nizhnevartovsk, 1995, 153.